

United States in Congress assembled. May 22d, 1788

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MAY, 22d, 1788.

THE Committee consisting of Mr. Dane, Mr. Williamson, Mr. Irvine, Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Brown, to whom was referred a Motion of Mr. Dane, relative to public and unsettled Accounts, having reported,

That, on carefully examining the subject referred to them, they find that during the late war, and especially in the early periods of it, many millions of dollars were advanced by the United States to sundry persons, of the expenditures whereof proper accounts have not been rendered; and though the persons who have been entrusted with public monies have been frequently called upon to settle their accounts by the acts and officers of Congress, yet in many cases they have not produced or exhibited to the proper officers any documents or vouchers on which regular settlements can be made.—That several accounts of very considerable extent have been taken up, and so far passed on, that balances appear to be stated generally, and in some cases payments made, though it does not appear that the proper statements were made of the articles which composed those accounts, or that the regular vouchers were produced to support the charges in them. Accounts thus imperfectly stated and unsupported, the Committee conceive are justly liable to revision; and particularly so, as it does not appear that the parties have at any time considered them as being finally settled.—That from a general view of this subject, the Committee are induced to think and believe, that the United States have already suffered very great inconveniencies, by inexcusable negligence and unauthorised delays, in persons entrusted with public monies, in not rendering and settling their accounts; and that it is become highly expedient that decisive measures be speedily adopted for closing all the unsettled accounts of the late war—and therefore the

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Committee are of opinion, That the Board of Treasury be directed, to cause suits to be commenced, in behalf of the United States, against all persons who stand charged with public monies or other property; and that they cause the same to be commenced within three months from this date, against all those persons who have been already specially required to settle their accounts by the proper officers, and who shall not within that time adopt and pursue measures effectual, in the opinion of the said Board, for settling the same; and within five months from this date, against all other persons so charged, and who shall not within that time adopt and pursue like measures: and, that when any material questions shall arise concerning any doubtful or partial settlements of accounts which may have been made, or concerning the operation of any particular suits, the said Board be directed to state to Congress, particularly the circumstances of the case, with their opinion thereon.

RESOLVED, That Congress agree to the said Report.

Board of Treasury calling to account all persons charged with public moneys or property
act May 22, 1788